

# **Community Assistantship Program**

## **A Selective Review of Documents Related to Sustainable Development in Southeast Minnesota**

The Community Assistantship Program is made possible by the generous support of the McKnight Foundation, the Otto Bremer Foundation, the Southern Initiative Fund, the Initiative Foundation, the Southwest Minnesota Foundation, the Northwest Minnesota Foundation, and the West Central Initiative Fund. Within the University of Minnesota, support is provided by Central Administration, the Rural Development Council, the College of Human Ecology, the University of Minnesota Extension Service, the College of Natural Resources, the College of Education and Human Development, the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences, the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture, the College of Liberal Arts, the College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, the Carlson School of Management, the Center for Small Towns, the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, and the five Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships.

# **A Selective Review of Documents Related to Sustainable Development in Southeast Minnesota**

Conducted on behalf of  
Experiment in Rural Cooperation

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August 1999

CAP Report 006

**CURA RESOURCE COLLECTION**

**Center for Urban and Regional Affairs  
University of Minnesota  
330 Humphrey Center**



## INTRODUCTION

The Experiment in Rural Cooperation is a regional agriculture and natural resources sustainable development partnership created by the Minnesota Legislature and facilitated by the University of Minnesota. The Experiment is lead by a citizen board of directors from southeast Minnesota. The partnership was created as a tool to broaden and deepen the land-grant mission of the University. The Experiment promotes University based research, outreach and education in southeast Minnesota.

This document contains summaries of reports, some specific to southeast Minnesota and others relevant to the University of Minnesota and its outreach efforts. The report is a way to highlight some of the work that has been accomplished in southeast Minnesota by the University of Minnesota and other organizations working in the region. It is also a way to showcase some of the organization efforts that are committed to working for rural Minnesota.

The goal of this report is to provide a partial background of the type of work that has been completed, or is underway, in southeast Minnesota and within the University regarding sustainable farming, forestry, and rural community development. To the extent possible, the Experiment in Rural Cooperation is committed to working within the context of established initiatives and to utilize presently available information and data.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   | Page |
|---|------|
| <br><b>i. THE ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA</b>   |      |
| The University of Minnesota's Role as A Partner in Rural Development in Minnesota (June 1991).....  | 5    |
| Inventory of Public Policy Research Related to Greater Minnesota (June 1995).....   | 6    |
| The Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture: A Partnership of Community Members and the University of Minnesota (October 1996)..... | 7    |
| University Students as Community Partners (September 1998).....   | 8    |
| Interdisciplinary Initiatives at the University of Minnesota: Exploring Our Place in the University (December 1998).....                    | 9    |
| Rural and Community Development: Opportunity Time for the University of Minnesota (April 1999).....   | 10   |
| <br><b>ii. SUSTAINABLE FARMING, FORESTRY, AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT</b>   |      |
| A Better Row to Hoe: The Economic, Environmental, and Social Impact of Sustainable Agriculture (December 1994).....                         | 11   |
| Monitoring Sustainable Agriculture with Conventional Financial Data (June 1996).....  | 12   |
| Sustaining Land, People, Animals & Communities: Policy Principles for Sustaining Livestock Development (May 1998).....                      | 13   |
| A New Dawn of Farming: The Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota's Formation & Growth (September 1998).....                          | 14   |
| Biennial Report: Sustainable Forest Resources Act Implementation 1997-1998.....   | 15   |
| Investing in Minnesota's Future: An Agenda for Sustaining Our Quality of Life (May 1998).....   | 16   |
| Blufflands Design Manual: Winona County / La Crescent Area Common Visions Project (1998).....   | 17   |
| Hiawatha Valley Resource Conservation and Development 1998 Annual Report & 1999 Annual Work Plan.....                                       | 18   |
| 1999 Program Overview and Marketing Initiatives & 1999 Marketing Opportunities for the Tourism Industry (November 1998).....                | 19   |
| Building the Dream, USDA Rural Development, Minnesota Five-year Strategic and Tribal Plans: 1999-2003.....                                  | 20   |
| <br><b>iii. WHOLE FARM PLANNING</b>   |      |
| Successful Whole Farm Planning: Essential Elements Recommended by the Great Lakes Basin Farm Planning Network (July 1996).....              | 21   |
| Whole Farm Planning: What it Takes, A Report from the Minnesota Working Group on Whole Farm Planning (July 1997).....                       | 22   |
| How to Establish Goals: A Group Project for Farmers and their Families (September 1998).....  | 23   |
| The Monitoring Tool Box (1998).....   | 24   |
| Whole Farm Planning: Combining Family, Profit, and Environment (1998).....  | 25   |

**iv. A VARIETY OF STUDIES CONDUCTED IN SOUTHEAST MINNESOTA**

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Business Retention and Expansion Strategies Program                          |    |
| Houston County-1994 (May 1994).....  | 26 |
| Southeastern Minnesota Industrial Cluster Study (September 1996).....        | 27 |
| Sustaining Vintage Village Tourism Priority Strategies (November 1996) ..... | 28 |
| MN Planning Population Turnaround in Rural Minnesota: Ten More               |    |
| Case Studies (February 1998) .....   | 29 |
| Rural Minnesota Pulse: A Survey on Key Issues Affecting Rural Minnesota      |    |
| (Summer 1998).....   | 30 |
| From Red Wing to St. Cloud – the LONG Way Around (August 1998) .....         | 31 |
| Summary of Winona County Township Work Sessions (Summer/Fall 1998).....      | 32 |
| Lanesboro Area Business Retention and Expansion Strategies Program           |    |
| (December 1998).....   | 33 |
| Resource Mapping Survey: Experiment in Rural Cooperation (August 1999).....  | 34 |

**v. Quarterly Newsletters and Resource Directories**

|   |    |
|---|----|
| The Resource (Winter 1998).....   | 35 |
| Community Connections (Summer 1998).....                                      | 36 |
| Alternative Agricultural Opportunities: A Bibliography (September 1991) ..... | 37 |
| USDA Rural Development Minnesota Resource Directory, October 1998.....        | 38 |
| Sustainable Agriculture Resource and Information Directory (1998).....        | 39 |
| Minnesota Sustainable Communities Network 1997 & 1998-1999 Directory.....     | 40 |

## **i. THE ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA**

### **The University of Minnesota's Role As A Partner In Rural Development In Minnesota**

(Written by Ed Frederick, Senior Fellow, Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs,  
University of Minnesota, June 1991.)

This report is the result of a request from University of Minnesota President Nils Hasselmo "to undertake an analysis and to make policy recommendation on the University's role in rural development and economic development in rural settings." Ed Frederick, a Senior Fellow at the University of Minnesota, conducted a study in order to determine how the U of M could be more effective in its efforts to further rural development. This study was conducted through interviews and surveys of over seventy people inside and over ninety people outside the University of Minnesota. The study's course was guided by an advisory committee made up of twenty-four individuals knowledgeable about, and in leadership positions involving, rural development.

The process involved identifying and cataloguing rural development activities in and outside of the University, reviewing programs in other selected states, becoming involved in rural development activities, reviewing the rural development literature and then developing a report on the activities, findings and recommendations for the University's involvement in rural development. The study resulted in four major recommendations that are as follows:

- Establish and implement a vision to move the U of M toward a "partnership university," one that is involved in networking, coordination, cooperation and collaboration with other educational institutions, government agencies, businesses and industry, and other organizations in helping to serve the needs of the people of the state.
- Implement a university-wide outreach program to the residents of Minnesota through a broadening of the mission of the Minnesota Extension Service.
- Establish a structure for coordinating rural development activities within the U of M.
- Aggressively move forward with telecommunications within the U of M and encourage the establishment of a statewide infrastructure for educational and outreach activities and as an aid for extending businesses and industries into greater Minnesota.

The study also produced several primary findings that are discussed in the report.

**Inventory of Public Policy Research  
Related to Greater Minnesota  
Results of a Survey of University of Minnesota Faculty**  
(A Publication of the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs written by Thomas Anding,  
Barbara Lukermann, and Margaret Wolfe, revised June 1995.)

This report contains the results of a survey of University of Minnesota Faculty in an effort to document the types of projects that are underway, or have been completed, related to greater Minnesota. Thomas L. Anding, Barbara L. Lukermann, and Margaret R. Wolf wrote the report, revised in June 1995. The project was undertaken as a result of quarterly workshops sponsored by CURA to stimulate interest in research relating to greater Minnesota. Information was obtained on 120 research projects relating to greater Minnesota. In this report the projects are organized first by topic area and then by project name. Each project listed includes information on the research areas, department's involved and primary investigators so researchers may share knowledge and/or develop new networks. A list of telephone numbers for principal investigators is also included in the report.

**The Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture:  
A Partnership of Community Members and the University of Minnesota**

(This report is a publication of the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture and was written by Helene Murray, October 1996.)

The purpose of this document, written by Helene Murray in October 1996, is to provide background information on the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture (MISA), which was formed in July of 1990. MISA is a joint venture of the University of Minnesota's College of Agriculture, Food, and Environmental Sciences, and the Sustainers' Coalition, a group of individuals and organizations. According to this report, the purpose of MISA is to bring together the interests of the agricultural community in a cooperative effort to develop and promote sustainable agriculture. MISA promotes dynamic agricultural systems that integrate the ecological, economic, and social aspects of life. This document explains the internal structure of the institute as well as its goals and accomplishments so far. A list of 1997 Board of Directors and MISA staff is also included.



## **University Students as Community Partners**

(A joint publication of the University of Minnesota Extension Service and the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, coordinated and written by Nicole Bates-Childs, September 1998.)

University Students as Community Partners is a report from the University of Minnesota Extension Service and the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs. Nicole Bates-Childs coordinated and wrote the report in September 1998. This report is intended to showcase just a few of the Extension-community partnerships that have taken place in an effort to highlight how students can become partners in community work. The goal of the report is to help Extension faculty think of new ways to incorporate students into outreach projects. It is believed that these partnerships are mutually beneficial and will enable Extension to expand the University's reach to all corners of the state. White Earth Indian Reservation Aki Planning Circle, Agri-tourism, and EagleWatch Interpretive Center are just three of the projects highlighted in this publication.

**Interdisciplinary Initiatives  
at the University of Minnesota  
Exploring Our Place in the University**

(This working paper is a joint publication of the University of Minnesota's Rural Development Council and the Center for Integrated Natural Resources and Agriculture Management, written by Jan Joannides, December 1998.)

Exploring Our Place in the University is a working paper written and prepared by Jan Joannides in December 1998. The paper is based on a series of conversations convened by the University of Minnesota's Rural Development Council and the Center for Integrated Natural Resources and Agricultural Management. These conversations took place as a way to better understand the place of interdisciplinary initiatives, centers and consortia within the University of Minnesota. As a foundation for these conversations, a series of interviews were conducted with individuals who run interdisciplinary initiatives at the University. The University of Minnesota is simultaneously a land grant university, a research university, and an urban university. Therefore this document looks at the unique opportunity the University of Minnesota has to capitalize on the numerous interfaces within.

## **Rural and Community Development Opportunity Time for the University of Minnesota**

(This report was published by the University of Minnesota Rural Development Council and written by G. Edward Schuh, chair of the council, April 1999.)

This is the fourth annual report by the Rural Development Council at the University of Minnesota. The report was completed April 1999, by G. Edward Schuh, Chair of the council. This paper explores the ways in which the University can strengthen its land grant mission and better reach the citizens of rural Minnesota. After acknowledging the population increases of the 1990s and the traditionally urban issues that smaller towns and rural areas are now facing, the council puts forth a three part education strategy for the "long-term well-being of rural Minnesota communities."

This three part strategy includes 1) internal efforts to fulfill the land grant mission by enhancing and integrating teaching, research and outreach in rural Minnesota, 2) external partnerships with the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Systems and other higher educational institutions to address rural economic priorities, and 3) focusing on improving learning through K-12 education as a long-term economic strategy for rural Minnesota communities.

The council also provides ten recommendations in order to achieve its goals. These recommendations are outlined in the report and include involving more colleges and other units of the University in the sustainable development of Minnesota's communities, as well as involving more faculty, professional and academic staff by providing economic incentives to participate. The council recommends continuing the community assistantship program, and increasing and better publicizing research on rural and community development and related issues as well.

ii. **SUSTAINABLE FARMING, FORESTRY, AND COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT**

**A Better Row to Hoe  
The Economic, Environmental, and Social  
Impact of Sustainable Agriculture**

(Northwest Area Foundation published this report with the assistance of Marty Strange and Cheryl Miller in December 1994; based on 6 years of research in a seven-state area.)

A Better Row to Hoe is based on six years of research, conducted in seven states, by a collaborative of people. The project was supported by over forty foundation grants totaling \$4.5 million. The research initiative was coordinated by the Center for Rural Affairs, Walthill, Nebraska, and was conceived and initiated by Karl Stauber during his tenure at the Foundation as vice president-program. A forthcoming book-*Planting the Future: Developing an Agriculture that Sustains Land and Community* to have been published in early 1995 by Iowa State University Press-will present many of the research findings and data in greater detail.

Norwest Area Foundation is a private regional foundation established in 1934. Its mission is to contribute to the vitality of its eight-state region-Minnesota, Iowa, North and South Dakota, Montana, Idaho, Washington, and Oregon-by promoting economic revitalization and improving the standard of living for the region's most vulnerable citizens. Funding is provided to alleviate rural and urban poverty and promote sustainable development.

This publication looks at several agriculture issues. Some of the issues include contradictions in American agriculture, farm practices and crop yields, farm finance and economic performance, community interaction, the adoption of sustainable agriculture, insights on sustainable agriculture, and the sustainable agriculture choice. An insert to this publication includes an overview of the research initiative as well as a summary of the four main policy recommendations that focus on promoting and rewarding sustainable agriculture.

## **Monitoring Sustainable Agriculture with Conventional Financial Data**

(A publication of the Land Stewardship Project written by Dick Levins, University of Minnesota Department of Applied Economics, June 1996.)

This Land Stewardship Project publication offers a new set of indicators to assess sustainability from year to year and farm to farm. This report is the first in a series of publications based on the work of the Biological, Social and Financial Monitoring Team. Levins chose four indicators to focus on which are as follows:

- Reliance on government programs
- Use of equipment, chemicals, and non-renewable energy
- Creation of jobs; and
- Balance between feed use and feed production

Levins chose these factors for many different reasons. One reason for these indicators is that they can be easily calculated from financial numbers farmers already have on hand.

This report includes examples of using the indicators that he outlines. It also contains a section that shows how to calculate the indicators. Blank worksheets follow the examples to allow readers to make calculations related to their farms.



**Sustaining Land, People, Animals & Communities:  
Policy Principles for Sustainable  
Livestock Development**

(Prepared by the Midwest Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, May 1998.)

This report was prepared by the Midwest Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, a subgroup of the Midwest Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (MSAWG), in May 1998. The MSAWG is a network of non-profit farm, food, environmental, religious, and rural community organizations that advocates public policies supporting the long-term sustainability of agriculture, natural resources, and rural communities. This paper is a follow-up to an earlier paper written in 1993 titled "Sustaining Land, People, Animals, and Communities: The Case for Livestock in a Sustainable Agriculture," which addressed the importance of sustainable livestock development. This paper picks up where that paper left off. Specifically, this eight-page document focuses on public policy and outlines some of the reforms the group feels are necessary to foster critically needed changes in livestock development.

The Midwest Sustainable Agriculture Coalition believes that sustainable livestock production provides opportunity for enhanced environmental stewardship, rural prosperity, and social equity. Some of the benefits include:

- environmentally beneficial crop rotations and grazing systems;
- conservation of highly erodible land by replacing erosive row crops with soil-conserving grasses and legumes;
- ecologically sound nutrient cycling, soil building, and improved water quality; and
- enhanced value retention within rural communities from food and farming activities.

The policy changes recommended by the Midwest Sustainable Agriculture Coalition reflect the need to deter the benefits given to large-scale factory farms in an effort to promote sustainable livestock development that has many more benefits.

**A New Dawn of Farming**  
**The Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota's**  
**Formation & Growth**

(A joint publication of the Land Stewardship Project and the Sustainable Farming Association  
of Minnesota, September 1998)

This joint publication of the Land Stewardship Project and the Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota outlines the formation and growth of the SFA of Minnesota. The Land Stewardship Project was responsible for organizing and founding the farmer-to-farmer information network. The first chapter was formed in southeast Minnesota on March 23, 1988. There are currently twelve chapters throughout Minnesota. Included in this report is a list of previous and current funders of SFA. A chapter on the SFA's continuing efforts to focus on its farmer-to-farmer roots is also included in the publication, drawing on past and future projects and events.

With twelve chapters located throughout Minnesota, the SFA is able to offer a support network to many different areas. The Sustainable Farming Association has a strong statement of purpose that is shared in the report. It reads as follows:

The Sustainable Farming Association recognizes the wisdom within ourselves and our communities to find ways of farming that are economically viable and ecologically sound. In the spirit of co-operation we offer mutual support and fellowship to strengthen our families and communities. Our diversity enhances the sharing of resources, new ideas, and approaches to farming.

**Biennial Report**  
**Sustainable Forest Resources Act**  
**Implementation 1997-1998**

(A publication of the Minnesota Forest Resources Council, 1999.)

The Minnesota Forest Resources Council (MFRC) submits this Biennial Report to the Governor and Legislature. The MFRC helps develop and implement Sustainable Forest Resources Act (SFRA) initiatives and advises the governor and federal, state, county and local governments on sustainable forest resource policies and practices. The second biennial report on SFRA implementation presents an overview of Minnesota's forest resources and updates on the progress of each SFRA program. It speaks to the importance of Minnesota's forests by detailing the condition and trends of forests and the activities that affect them. Successfully sustaining Minnesota's forests requires that decision makers, resource managers and planners, and all citizens are well informed about ecological and economic aspects of the forests and the activities that affect them.

**Investing in Minnesota's Future:  
An Agenda for Sustaining Our Quality of Life  
A report to the Governor**

(Prepared by the Minnesota Round Table on Sustainable Development with assistance from John Wells, Round Table director, and Rolf Nordstrom, assistant director and several other contributors, May 1998.)

This report is about the long-term future of Minnesota and what it will take to keep it prosperous over time. Governor Arne Carlson who appointed 30 business, environmental and community leaders to the Round Table on January 17, 1996 initiated the report. He asked them to identify practical ways of achieving economic and community vitality while sustaining the quality of Minnesota's environment. The report offers a new path toward progress based on providing Minnesotans with good jobs, vital communities, and a healthy environment.

The Minnesota Round Table on Sustainable Development offers five principles as guideposts along the path of sustainable development. They are Global Interdependency, Stewardship, Conservation, Indicators and Shared responsibility. The Round Table also established a series of strategies consistent with these principles. They are:

- Raise awareness and understanding by elevating and expanding discussions about sustainable development in both the public and private sectors, integrating sustainable development concepts into the curricula, and informing consumers about the life-cycle environmental impacts of the products they purchase.
- Measure progress toward sustainable development by continually improving and updating *Minnesota Milestone*, developing an integrated report card, and engaging communities by developing model indicators and sharing information.
- Encourage sustainable communities by developing a team approach to community assistance and providing the incentives needed to get people, communities and state agencies to join in the Community-Based Planning process.
- Engage and empower business by developing state-of-the-art methods for assessing full life-cycle costs and environmental effects of activities and products, establish regulatory standards, and establish a special commission to examine tax policy.
- Create new institutions and approaches such as a Minnesota Center for Sustainable Development outside of government.
- Understand connections between long-term economic and environmental health, and the issues of liberty and justice by convening a forum of people of diverse ages and backgrounds to discuss these connections and issues.

**Blufflands Design Manual**  
**Winona County / La Crescent Area Common Visions Project**  
(Prepared by Robert J. Hurt with Korelle Hendee, along with input from members of the  
Advisory Committee of The Winona County/La Crescent Area Common Visions Project,  
1998.)

The Blufflands Design Manual is the final product of the 1995 LCMR funded "Winona County / La Crescent Area Common Visions Project." Funding for the project was approved by the Minnesota Legislature, with additional funding provided by the Bluffland Alliance, the Minnesota Office of Environmental Assistance, and the Winona County Planning Department. The manual is comprised of a number of sections and components including photographs of the area. The book has three main sections with the second section being divided into three parts.

The purpose of the first section of the book is to provide some background on the blufflands landscape and related topics. It describes the local landscape, early settlement patterns in the area, current growth and development trends and the various costs and impacts of those trends.

The second section of the book is titled "Growth Management Framework Plan." This section is divided into three parts. The first part describes "The Common Vision" that was developed with the citizen Advisory Committee in the second year of the *Common Visions Project* and describes what the project participants would like to see for the future of the Blufflands Region. The second part titled "Implementation Options" describes various approaches that local units of government, businesses and individuals might consider to help accomplish some of the Common Vision goals. This part contains little input from project participants. The final part of this section consists of two essays that were developed and authored by two separate committees comprised of Common Visions participants, each with different viewpoints on property rights. It is titled "Two Viewpoints on Property Rights & Takings."

The last section of the book is the Appendix. It contains additional information on the process of the Winona County / La Crescent Area Common Visions Project. It also includes a township resolution and a property rights petition that was circulated throughout the area along with a letter from many of the project participants which offers a different viewpoint on the resolution and petition.



**Hiawatha Valley  
Resource Conservation and Development  
1998 Annual Report & 1999 Annual Work Plan**

(Roger Lenzmeier, Rochester office Coordinator, Diana Stain, Assistant, Frank Irwin, Council  
Chairman)

This report outlines a few of the projects and activities that the Hiawatha Valley RC&D have undertaken in 1998 and future projects. These range from a Wood Products Revolving Loan Fund and Business start-ups to addressing Grantwriting Training Needs and Dry Hydrants. The report also outlines a work plan for 1999 and provides a list of board of directors that represent the eleven counties that the agency operates in. Those counties are Dodge, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Mower, Olmsted, Rice, Steele, Wabasha, and Winona. A list of General Procedures and Duties and Responsibilities is also included.

The Resource Conservation and Development Council's mission is to provide a regional framework to empower people to balance environmental and economic needs through leadership, collaboration, communication and project development. The projects that the RC&D are involved in are considered the "people's projects." Funding for these projects is secured through a number of sponsors and grants. County sponsors include the SWCDs and Boards of County Commissioners.

**1999 Program Overview and  
Marketing Initiatives &  
1999 Marketing Opportunities for the Tourism Industry**

(A publication of the Minnesota Office of Tourism, a division of the Department of Trade and  
Economic Development, November 1998.)

The Minnesota Office of Tourism's 1999 Program Overview and Marketing Initiatives is designed to give an overview of the marketing goals, strategic objectives, and the 1999 marketing plan and Initiatives of the Office of Tourism. The purpose of the Minnesota Office of Tourism, as a division of the Department of Trade and Economic Development, is to advance the economic vitality of Minnesota by employing all available resources to generate high quality jobs; expand foreign direct investment and exportation of Minnesota products; and encourage travel.

The Minnesota Office of Tourism also has a guide for the Tourism Industry that outlines the marketing programs and resources available to businesses through the Office of Tourism. The guide is titled 1999 Marketing Opportunities for the Tourism Industry. It includes information on travel media relations, advertising opportunities in consumer publications, electronic marketing and international marketing.

**Building the Dream**  
**USDA Rural Development, Minnesota**  
**Five-year Strategic and Tribal Plans: 1999-2003**

(Prepared by the USDA Rural Development-Minnesota, Gary DeCramer, State Director, with assistance provided by Minnesota Rural Partners and the University of Minnesota's Rural Development Council.)

This report outlines the Minnesota USDA Rural Development five-year Strategic Plan. The State Director, Gary DeCramer, was responsible for redoing the plan and asked the University of Minnesota's Rural Development Council and Minnesota Rural Partners to help prepare the plan. Together they embarked on a journey through rural Minnesota to gather information about rural communities' assets and needs, and brainstorm ways in which USDA Rural Development and their partners could help communities, individuals, and businesses achieve their development goals. Through the process, they gathered valuable information that serves as the foundation of the Strategic Plan.

As a first step in the planning process, two Research Assistants, supported by the University of Minnesota's Rural Development Council, surveyed 105 plans from organizations in rural Minnesota. This process identified seven categories that are the focus of program activities in rural areas. These categories are Workforce Development, Knowledge and Technology, Physical Infrastructure, Enterprise and Development, Quality of Life, Natural Resources, and Fiscal Management. Seven Rural Community Conversations then took place throughout the state. These conversations helped the three organizations learn about the opportunities and challenges facing rural Minnesotans and their hopes and dreams for the futures of their communities.

The strategic plan is intended to direct the activities and priorities of the mission area in the efforts to assist rural Minnesota now and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The plan outlines key external factors, assumptions, the vision, mission and guiding principals of USDA Rural Development, goals, management initiatives and tribal plans. The Appendix contains information on meeting participants as well as more detailed information related to the seven Rural Community Conversations that added to the development of this plan.

### **iii. WHOLE FARM PLANNING**

#### **Successful Whole Farm Planning: Essential Elements Recommended by the Great Lakes Basin Farm Planning Network**

(A publication of The Minnesota Project coordinated by Loni Kemp, July 1996; based on input from a seven state region.)

The Great Lakes Basin Farm Planning Network is comprised of 120 participants that represent seven states (Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin) and the province of Ontario. Farmers, nonprofit groups, researchers, and agency staff are engaged in a multi-year collaborative effort to explore, demonstrate, and evaluate various whole farm planning approaches. A survey, conducted by Dr. Thomas Hoban, added input to the 26 member steering committee discussions about the essential elements of a whole farm plan.

This paper represents the current consensus of participants in the Great Lakes Basin Farm Planning Network. It is intended to be a guide for designing and evaluating farm planning programs. Nine farm planning programs are currently underway and the committee agrees that different methods appeal to different farmers. However, there are essential elements that are applicable to all approaches that farmers use to integrate information, goals, and plans for their land and their farming business.

According to the Network whole farm planning serves many purposes that include:

- Coordinate Regulations
- Improve Conservation and Water Quality
- Integrate Economics and Environment
- Promote Sustainable Agriculture; and
- Consider Quality of Life

The report also outlines essential goals for a whole farm plan, qualities of the whole farm planning process, and essential contents of a whole farm plan.

**Whole Farm Planning: What it Takes**  
**A Report from the Minnesota Working Group on Whole Farm Planning**  
(Published by the Land Stewardship Project, Minnesota Department of Agriculture-Whole Farm Planning Program, and the Minnesota Extension Service-Water Quality Program, written by the 26 members of the Whole Farm Planning Working Group, July 1997.)

This report presents three important topics discussed by the Working Group: the essential elements of the whole farm planning process, the essential components of a whole farm plan and essential outcomes of whole farm planning. These topics are then followed by recommendations of the Working Group based on their discussions. The report also includes a summary of the whole farm planning forums that the Whole Farm Planning Program of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture held in the winter and spring of 1996.

The Working Group makes five primary recommendations in this report. One of those recommendations is that the U.S. Congress and the Minnesota Legislature should consider the essential elements of whole farm planning as they authorize and fund new and existing agricultural and environmental initiatives. The group also recommends that natural resources agencies, researchers, farm service providers and farm organizations should integrate whole farm planning elements into new and existing programs. Staff should be encouraged to participate and be given training in whole farm planning. They also think that those who are developing new plans should see that the processes are farmer-based and promote creative collaborative effort.



**How to Establish Goals:  
A Group Project for Farmers and their Families**

(Published by The Minnesota Project with funding provided by The Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture. This booklet is a product of the Whole Farm Planning Team's thought and work with the assistance of John Lamb and Kathleen Davidson of the Minnesota Project, September 1998.)

How to Establish Goals: A Group Project for Farmers and their Families, is a joint effort by John Lamb of the Minnesota Project, the Whole Farm Planning Interdisciplinary Team, and The Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture. In September 1998, a workbook for farmers was created as a bridge to whole-farm planning. The worksheets allow people to establish individual goals that suit their needs. The Whole Farm Planning Team feels that reading and completing the worksheets in this workbook will allow farmers to create goals that will "guide and motivate" them to produce a successful whole farm plan. The booklet includes five main sections; An easy process for setting goals, Reasons to have goals, Who should help set goals, Completing a self-assessment work sheet, and Setting your goals.

### **The Monitoring Tool Box**

(The Land Stewardship Project published this report under the guidance of George Boody and Richard Ness and the project team members, 1998. Funding provided in part by MISA.)

*The Monitoring Tool Box* (1998) is a guide to on-farm monitoring and is a Land Stewardship Project publication. This Monitoring Project was directed by George Boody and coordinated by Richard Ness of the Land Stewardship Project. Many other people, including farmers, worked on creating this publication. The *Monitoring Tool Box* comes with a video titled *Close to the Ground* and is a workbook intended for farmers interested in learning easy-to-use techniques for monitoring the impact of management decisions on their land, finances and family. The *Monitoring Tool Box, Close to the Ground* video, & subscription to the new monitoring newsletter can be purchased for \$35 plus shipping and handling.

Contents of this publication include general information for making the most of the Tool Box, general tools for monitoring, and six monitoring topics. The monitoring topics include quality of life, farm sustainability with financial data, birds, frogs and toads, soil and streams. The primary intention of this project is to provide farm families and other rural landowners and residents with a powerful management tool they can use to help achieve the goals they set for themselves, their farm or land, and their community. The Tool Box includes worksheets for individuals to carry out suggested activities. The workbook also provides additional resources broken down by topic.

## **Whole Farm Planning: Combining Family, Profit, and Environment**

(A joint publication between MISA and the University of Minnesota Extension Service written by David Mulla and Les Everett of the U of MN and Gigi DiGiacomo, Consultant, 1998.)

This joint publication is part of a new series of information materials developed through the Sustainable Agriculture Information Exchange (part of MISA). Funding for this project was approved by the Minnesota Legislature in 1995 as part of the Information Exchange. According to the Minnesota Whole Farm Planning Working Group, Whole Farm Planning is a four-step process, which can be used by the farm family to balance the quality of life they desire with the farm's resources, the need for production and profitability, and long-term stewardship. This report addresses whole farm planning and begins by outlining the four steps involved in the process. The four steps are described as 1) Setting Goals; 2) Inventory and Assessment; 3) Action Plan; and 4) Monitoring Progress.

This report suggests that Whole Farm Planning, also known as Comprehensive Farm Planning, can help you:

- Develop a vision for your farm many years into the future.
- Improve profitability and efficiency.
- Build respect from the community for protecting the environment.
- Make the farm a safe and healthy place for you and your family.

After a brief description of each of the four steps, the authors turn to a discussion of farm planning tools. Within this context whole farm planning tools are then compared to regular farm planning tools. Contact information and additional resources for Planning can also be found in the report.

**iv. A VARIETY OF STUDIES CONDUCTED IN SOUTHEAST  
MINNESOTA**

**Business Retention and Expansion  
Strategies Program  
Houston County-1994**

(A University of Minnesota publication prepared by Theresa M. Heiland and George W. Morse in May, 1994.)

The Business Retention and Expansion Strategies Program, which is a compilation of research results, strategies and recommendations for Houston County, was prepared by Theresa M. Heiland and George W. Morse in May, 1994. This study contains the results of interviews by volunteers of fifty-eight firms in Houston County representing 14% of the total number of firms. 43% of the businesses are in retail trade, 17% in service industries and 15% in manufacturing firms.

This study has three primary objectives. The first objective is to demonstrate the communities' pro-business attitude. Secondly, assist, if possible, with the individual concerns of local firms. Finally, develop community programs to address those concerns mentioned by a number of firms. As a result of the study a four-part strategy was developed. Strategy one focuses on improving the competitiveness of Houston County. Strategy two involves upgrading the labor force. Strategy three centers on enhancing the quality of life in Houston County. Lastly, strategy four deals with continuing business retention and expansion efforts.

## **Southeastern Minnesota Industrial Cluster Study**

(A joint publication between The Initiative Fund of Southeastern and South Central Minnesota and The State and Local Policy Program of the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota, conducted by Lee Munnich, Jr., Margaret Bau, and Laurie Berkwitz, September 1996.)

This is a joint project between The Initiative Fund of Southeastern and South Central Minnesota, of which Trixie Ann Goldberg is the Executive Director, and The State and Local Policy Program of The Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota. Lee W. Munnich, Jr., a Senior Fellow and Director, conducted the study along with Margaret M. Bau and Laurie L. Berkwitz.

The study was conducted to analyze the key industries that serve as the backbone of regional economic development and that may continue to impact the future economy. The Initiative Fund posed two questions: 1) what are the characteristics that have contributed to the development of these industries in the region?, and 2) what can be done to further support and sustain these industries? Michael Porters "Diamond of Advantage" served as the framework for the analysis.

Four clusters were identified for the region: 1) composites, 2) printing, publishing and software, 3) industrial machinery and computers, and 4) food processing. Some of the findings include:

- Strong work ethic but increasing shortage of workers and lack of needed skills.
- Central location and proximity to Twin Cities a strength, but low population density of the region are a limitation.
- Home demand may have been stronger initially, but is weaker now in a relative sense as companies have expanded their markets.
- Some feel opportunities exist for selected suppliers to locate in the region.
- Industries are very diversified; a majority of competition comes from out of state.
- Concern that firms will decrease participation in the life of their local communities as local supplier and customer links dwindle and more companies are bought out or consolidate.



## **Sustaining Vintage Village Tourism Priority Strategies**

(This report was sponsored by the Minnesota-Wisconsin Extension Partnership Grant, published by the Minnesota Extension Service, University of Minnesota, and written by Daniel L. Erkkila and George W. Morse with input given by the Mississippi Valley Partners BR&E Task Force, November 1996.)

Daniel L. Erkkila and George W. Morse wrote the final report of the Mississippi Valley Partners Tourism Business and Expansion Survey November 1996. The Minnesota-Wisconsin Extension Partnership Grant sponsored the study. Mississippi Valley Partners, a rural tourism coalition surrounding Lake Pepin, undertook a Tourism BR&E program in a 12-community, two-state MVP area. They began by identifying 105 tourism and travel businesses in the region. Out of those 105 businesses that were identified 82 firms accepted an invitation to be visited by volunteers and complete a survey.

This report presents six priority projects within three broad strategies, set by the MVP BR&E Task Force, that will be undertaken to help existing tourism and travel businesses to survive and grow. The three specific objectives of the project were to:

- illustrate the economic importance of the travel and tourism industry to the MVP area;
- demonstrate the area's appreciation to our tourism businesses for their contributions to our local economy; and
- develop action plans to remove obstacles for continued and balanced growth of the MVP area's travel and tourism industry.

The first strategy was to enhance organizational effectiveness for successful execution of tourism programs. Secondly, refine and direct marketing of the MVP area. Four of the six projects fall under this strategy. The final strategy is to build an understanding of tourism's importance.

**MN Planning**  
**Population Turnaround in Rural Minnesota:**  
**Ten More Case Studies**

(This is a working paper prepared by the staff at the Minnesota State Demographic Center, February 1998. The paper takes a close look at Houston County as it is growing at a fast rate.)

This publication is a working paper prepared by Karin Holt, Martha McMurry, Dave Rademacher, Barbara Ronningen and Diana Telschow at the State Demographic Center. The paper was written in February 1998 as a follow-up to an earlier study about the gains in population in the 1990s compared to the population losses of the 1980s. This report looks at five counties with consistently growing populations and five counties consistently losing population. Houston County was listed as one of five counties growing faster in 1990 than 1980. Several factors have contributed to the population gains of the 1990s including natural increase and net in-migration.

The study found that the population growth in Houston County is primarily due to the proximity to LaCrosse, WI. LaCrescent, MN has become a suburban expansion area for LaCrosse. Although residential housing increases are significant, retail and commercial development in the area is poor. Areas more distant from LaCrosse profit from the amenities of the bluff country and Root River Trail in Fillmore County. Employment growth has been strong in the county but labor is tight and skilled workers are hard to find. Housing is also tight throughout the county with little affordable and rental housing, Spring Grove being an exception.

**Rural Minnesota Pulse**  
**A Survey on Key Issues Affecting Rural Minnesota**

(This survey was sponsored by the Blandin Foundation and conducted by C.J. Olson Market Research, Inc during the summer of 1998.)

The mission of the Blandin Foundation is to strengthen rural communities in Minnesota. Therefore, this survey looks at critical issues in rural Minnesota. The results highlighted in this mailing are based on a random sample telephone survey of 1,072 rural Minnesotans. The survey, conducted between June 16 and July 9, 1998, was a way to document issues of critical importance to residents outside of the seven county metropolitan area. The people surveyed lived in communities of less than 35,000 people. The results will be shared with policy leaders throughout the state.

The findings of the report show two major concerns of rural Minnesota. Attracting new businesses and involving teenagers on a daily basis in community activities are the two greatest local needs. Rural communities must address the need to involve adolescents and young adults in the future of their communities. The survey also looks at the need for worker training. One debate that exists questions who should pay for worker training. Labor shortages are also a problem in rural Minnesota. On a positive note, residents are most satisfied with k-12 education.

**From Red Wing to St. Cloud – the LONG Way Around  
A Report to the First Rural Summit on the  
Rural Community Conversations  
Focusing on the Challenges Facing Minnesota  
Now and Into the Next Century**

(Published by Minnesota Rural Partners, University of Minnesota Rural Development Council,  
and the United States Department of Agriculture - Rural Development – Minnesota, August  
1998.)

This report highlights the status of rural Minnesota, and offers some key observations based on the priorities and programs of 105 organizations that focus on rural and community issues. At a conference that took place in Red Wing, Minnesota in February 1997, a diverse group of more than 100 individuals, representing federal, state, local, and tribal governments as well as the private, nonprofit, and education sectors, gathered to ask a few important questions. They asked one another what might spark a cohesive approach to rural development and how they might support the excellent programs that already exist within the state. The conference was entitled "Rural Development in Minnesota: The Long and Short of it," and was convened by the University of Minnesota Rural Development Council and Minnesota Rural Partners. Dr. Comelia Butler Flora, director of the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development, was the guest speaker.

The University of Minnesota Rural Development Council and Minnesota Rural Partners continued to work with many of the conference participants to develop and draft a proposal to the Fund for Rural America to develop a statewide rural strategy. Although the proposal was not funded through the FRA, a segment of the proposal was funded by the 1997 Minnesota Legislature through the University of Minnesota Regional Agriculture and Natural Resources Sustainable Development Partnerships.

The USDA Rural Development, which is the successor agency to the USDA Farmers Home Administration, planning process was started in the Fall of 1997. The State Director asked Minnesota Rural Partners and the University of Minnesota's Rural Development Council if they would co-convene a grassroots process that would ultimately provide input to the USDA Rural Development Strategic Plan. One component of the planning efforts was consulting with users of state and federal programs. This was accomplished by holding seven "Rural Community Conversations."

This report highlights the themes from these conversations and includes a summary of each conversation. The conversations took place in Mankato, Bemidji, Herman, Cookston, Marshall, Braham, and Eveleth. Some of the general themes that arose from the seven Rural Community Conversations include civic leadership, community ownership, infrastructure, access to capital, and access to information.

### **Summary of Winona County Township Work Sessions**

(A series of township meetings hosted by Jeffrey Bloomquist that took place between June 29 and October 12, 1998 in southeast Minnesota.)

The following townships are included in this summary: Dresbach, Elba, Fremont, Hart, Hillsdale, Homer, Mount Vernon, New Hartford, Norton, Pleasant Hill, Richmond, Rollingstone, Saratoga, St. Charles, Utica, Warren, Whitewater, Wilson, and Wiscoy. The meetings were conducted between June 29 and October 12, 1998. Each Work Session began with an introduction of Jeffrey Bloomquist, the host.

The Comprehensive Plan was the focus of the work sessions and the process and need for updating the Plan was explained to the township citizens. Discussion and review of the process and timeline for completing the update of the Comprehensive Plan followed. The concept and thought behind a comprehensive plan was reviewed at some of the meetings while others discussed differences between the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Ordinance. The use of GIS was discussed at some of the meetings also. Citizens were then allowed to express their concerns over these issues. Although each summary is laid out somewhat different, it is still useful to compare the notes from the individual meetings.

**Lanesboro Area  
Business Retention and Expansion Strategies Program  
Summary Report**

(A publication of the University of Minnesota Extension Service along with several state and local sponsors. The summary was prepared by George Morse and Patricia Love, Department of Applied Economics, University of Minnesota, December 1998.)

George Morse and Patricia Love, both with the Department of Applied Economics at the University of Minnesota, prepared the Lanesboro Area Business Retention and Expansion Strategies Program summary report, December 1998. This summary is based on the Research Report, May 1998, for this project. A forty-two member Task Force made up of local citizens selected the priorities of the report. The program is sponsored locally by the City of Lanesboro, Independent School District 229, Lanesboro ACT, Lanesboro EDA, and the University of Minnesota Extension Service-Fillmore County. State sponsors for the program include the University of Minnesota Extension Service, Department of Applied Economics, and the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Science.

The community leaders in the Lanesboro area who started the BR&E program in February 1998 had three primary objectives, which are as follows:

- To demonstrate the community's pro-business attitude and to express appreciation to local firms for the contributions they are making to the local economy.
- To identify needs and concerns of the existing local businesses so that the local business climate can be improved.
- To learn the future plans of the area's local firms with respect to retention, expansion, and/or relocation.

In order to accomplish those objectives forty-two local citizens and leaders visited 61 firms to learn about their concerns, plans, and information needs. The surveys were then sent to the University of Minnesota and entered into a database. A panel of local representatives, state agency personnel, and University faculty reviewed the results and developed suggested actions for the Lanesboro area. Four strategies will be examined using the data from the firm surveys and three priority projects have been developed. The strategies and priority projects are as follows:

- Strategy 1: Helping Firms Learn About Increasing Productivity
  - Project #1: Inventory of Available Space
  - Project #2: Establishing an Ongoing Red Flag Group
- Strategy 2: Improving Labor Availability and Productivity
- Strategy 3: Expand Firm Revenues
  - Project #3: Encourage Retail Stores to Coordinate Store Hours
- Strategy 4: Improve the Quality of Life in the Area

## **Resource Mapping Survey Experiment In Rural Cooperation**

(A publication of the Experiment in Rural Cooperation written and prepared by Dick Broeker and Kari Droubie, August 1999. This report contains the results of a survey sent to the leadership of southeast Minnesota.)

This report contains the results of a Resource Mapping Survey that was prepared by the citizen board of directors of the Experiment in Rural Cooperation. The Experiment in Rural Cooperation is a regional agriculture and natural resources sustainable development partnership created by the Minnesota Legislature in 1997 and facilitated by the University of Minnesota. The Experiment is a citizen tool to broaden and deepen the land-grant mission of the University. It promotes University based research, outreach and education in southeast Minnesota and supports local projects and businesses in agriculture and natural resources, including farming, tourism and forestry. Its goal is to foster a homegrown economy that will support self-reliant communities and a healthy natural environment in southeast Minnesota.

The Experiment in Rural Cooperation undertook this region-wide resource mapping survey in March 1999. The region includes the counties of Wabasha, Winona, and Houston; most of Fillmore, Goodhue, and Olmsted counties; and the northeast corners of Mower and Dodge counties. The purpose of the survey is to aggregate information on issues, assets, and priorities and to initiate a conversation with the citizen leadership of southeast Minnesota. The research questionnaire was sent to 431 individuals, representing all kinds of public and private organizations in the region. The questionnaire return rate was nearly 60%; a high response considering the length of the survey and the amount of time it took to complete. The aim is for the partnership to define issues through community discussions. Therefore, survey results and information obtained through four community forums, held in response to the overwhelming interest created by the questionnaire, will aid the Experiment in making project decisions.

This report includes a summary of findings, detailed results of the questionnaire, a copy of the questionnaire and series of letters sent out and four lists of important issues that were raised during the community forums. Some of the things the data suggests the Experiment in Rural Cooperation should spend its resources and energy on are the future of farming and agriculture, enhancing the environment and natural resources base, reinvigorating small town life and main street commerce, and supporting a genuine rural way of life.

v.      **QUARTERLY NEWSLETTERS AND RESOURCE DIRECTORIES**

**The Resource**

(A quarterly publication by the Minnesota Office of Environmental Assistance, Winter 1998.)

The Resource is a quarterly publication by the Minnesota Office of Environmental Assistance (OEA). The OEA is a state agency that promotes environmental responsibility through education and assistance. The winter 1998 issue of The Resource focuses on sustainable communities, specifically how the OEA and others are working toward sustainability. The OEA feels that one key approach to sustainability is to meet current challenges in a preventative way. Some of the articles in this addition include Green Source 2020, an article titled *Southeast Minnesota: How rural people care for their home* written by Nancy Bratrud, and an update on the sustainable communities regional meeting which over 300 people attended. This addition also includes the best Internet resources according to OEA.



## **Community Connections**

(Published quarterly by the staff of The Minnesota Project, Mid-Summer 1998 addition.)

Community Connections is a quarterly publication written by the staff of The Minnesota Project. The mission of The Minnesota Project is to work with rural people learning new ways to experience and celebrate community with each other and with the earth. The mid-summer 1998 issue contains stories related to community and the environment. The newsletter also includes updates on the various programs that have been undertaken by The Minnesota Project. This issue provides an introduction to the "Clean Energy for Today and Tomorrow" project that was in the beginning stages when this volume was written. The Clean Energy Campaign acknowledges that Minnesota is beginning to shift its mix of power sources, increasing the percentage that comes from clean, renewable sources and decreasing the most polluting sources. This addition also includes information on the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Mississippi River Basin Alliance. The Minnesota Project helped others organize the Alliance in 1992.

## **Alternative Agricultural Opportunities: A Bibliography**

(Published by the Center for Alternative Plant and Animal Products, University of Minnesota.  
Funded by the Extension Service, United States Department of Agriculture, September  
1991.)

In September 1991, the Center for Alternative Plant and Animal Products at the University of Minnesota was given a special grant from the Extension Service, United States Department of Agriculture, to produce the Alternative Agricultural Opportunities: A Bibliography. This is a bibliography on alternative agricultural enterprises compiled of Extension publications; conference proceedings, research reports, fact sheets, and manuals generally not included in computerized agriculture databases.

This bibliography does not include materials that are readily accessible through existing databases. In the printed version of this database, entries are grouped by broad subject area, and then listed alphabetically under the subject headings. These major subject headings include Agronomic Field Crops, Horticultural Crops, Forest Resources, Livestock, and Marketing and Economics. The printed version also includes ordering information. Although they encourage people to order publications directly from the publisher, a copy service is provided on a cost-recovery basis. This material is also available in electronic database form for \$5.00.

**USDA Rural Development  
Minnesota Resource Directory  
October 1998**

USDA Rural Development was formerly Rural Economic and Community Development, Rural Development Administration and Farmers Home Administration. The agency is partners in helping the people of Rural America develop sustainable communities. The mission of USDA Rural Development is to enhance the ability of rural communities to develop, to grow, and to improve their quality of life by targeting financial and technical resources in areas of greatest need through activities of greatest potential.

This resource directory provides a list of the local offices in Minnesota and information on a number of existing programs. The Rural Housing Service briefly outlines ten of its loan and grant programs. The Rural Business-Cooperative Service outlines seven loan and grant programs related to rural business and industry. The Rural Utilities Service includes information on loans and grants available for water and waste disposal, technical assistance and training, solid waste management and distance learning and telemedicine. There is also information on the Alternative Agriculture Research and Commercialization Corporation.

### **Sustainable Agriculture Resource And Information Directory**

(A publication of the Energy and Sustainable Agriculture Program, Minnesota Department of Agriculture. This 1998 directory was compiled by Darla Riley and the ESAP and will be updated as needed.)

The third addition of the Sustainable Agriculture Resource and Information Directory, (1998) compiled by Darla Riley and the Energy and Sustainable Agriculture Program (ESAP) of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, contains a list of organizations that work in sustainable agriculture. It also includes ESAP publications, ESAP resources for sustainable agriculture as well as related Internet addresses. This directory serves as a resource for individuals, producers and groups in Minnesota and the surrounding area.

The mission of the ESAP is to work toward the goal of sustainability for Minnesota agriculture by designing and implementing programs that meet the identified needs and support the creativity of Minnesota Farmers.

## **Minnesota Sustainable Communities Network 1997 & 1998-1999 Directory**

(A publication of the Minnesota Office of Environmental Assistance in association with the Minnesota Sustainable Communities Network, updated annually.)

The Minnesota Office of Environmental Assistance (OEA) reproduces this directory on an annual basis. The mission of the OEA is to protect Minnesota's environment and assure a sustainable economy through waste prevention and resource conservation. The Minnesota Sustainable Communities Network promotes exchange of information, networking, and better access to assistance on the topic of sustainable communities. This directory provides contact information so MnSCN members can easily communicate and form study circles to explore the possibility of working on specific initiatives to create sustainable communities. A sustainable community is defined as having a healthy natural environment, a prosperous economy, and vibrant society.

The network consists of individuals, non-profit organizations, businesses, local governments, educational institutions and other organizations in Minnesota and other places interested in moving toward sustainability. The directory is organized in alphabetical order by members' last name. You can also search for members by their organizational affiliation and by city and state. Benefits of membership include access to information about sustainability, opportunities for networking, access to assistance, financial assistance, and referrals.